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ABSTRACT

Video-taped samples of two help-oriented groups were rated for six leader and participant facilitating behaviors and therapeutic process (self-exploration). As manifested by leaders and participants, two help-oriented behaviors were significantly correlated. Four leader behaviors were positively correlated with participant self-exploration, although none of these same behaviors as manifested by participants was found to be positively related to self-exploration. (Author)

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Relationship Among Group Leader and
Participant Behaviors and Therapeutic Process

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The purpose of this study was to further understanding of the helping process as it occurs in groups. Specifically, this research examined the relation among therapist facilitating behavior, client facilitating behavior and client self-exploration in groups. The modeling of therapist facilitating behavior by clients may be a mediating variable in the relationship between therapist facilitating behavior and client self-exploration. In addition, this study allowed for some tentative comparisons of the helping process in two kinds of groups--encounter and psychotherapy groups.

Traditional therapy has usually occurred in the format of a dyad. In the past three decades, the formal therapeutic setting has been expanded to include the format of a small group, usually consisting of one or two therapists and six to twelve clients. Some social psychologists have noted that such a small group is only a different form of the basic interpersonal dyad, suggesting that the same kinds of processes are operating in both the dyad and small group (Thibaut & Kelly, 1959). Although it would be incorrect to argue that the interpersonal process within dyads and groups is exactly the same, it does not seem unreasonable to postulate that some of those behaviors which facilitate dyadic therapy

will also facilitate group therapy.

Previous research (Truax, 1961; Truax and Carkhuff, 1967; Truax and Mitchell, 1971) by proponents of the client-centered orientation has identified and described a number of facilitating behaviors, four of which are examined in the present research: these are accurate empathy (E), unconditional positive regard (R), congruence (C), and willingness-to-be-known (WK). The facilitating effect of empathy, regard, and congruence has been fairly well established, particularly for therapist presentation of these behaviors. However, most of the evidence stems from research on dyadic helping relationships. The effectiveness of these behaviors when manifested by group members has not been demonstrated as convincingly (Truax, 1961; Truax and Carkhuff, 1967). The support for effectiveness of willingness-to-be-known tends to be equivocal for both therapist and client (Truax, 1961). Client-centered research (Walker, Rablen and Rogers, 1966; Truax and Carkhuff, 1967) has also consistently used self-exploration (DX) as a measure of therapeutic process and has repeatedly found significant positive relationships between levels of facilitating behavior and depth of self-exploration.

Recent studies of group process (Bach, 1967a, 1967b, 1967c; Lieberman, Yalom, and Miles, 1973) have indicated that other behaviors besides E, R, C, and WK may be therapeutic in a help-oriented group. Bach (1967a, 1967b, 1967c) and Bach and

Wyden (1969) have found that assertive confrontation (AC) was rated as particularly helpful by members of marathon groups and by couples in conjoint therapy which suggests that confrontation may be a generally facilitative behavior for help-oriented groups.

One of my mentors in graduate school, Dr. Gil Freitag (1970) suggested that valency of emotional expression (VE) may be a significant helping process variable. On the one hand, expression of positive feelings may result in greater group harmony and cohesiveness, and thus increase the probability of client self-exploration. On the other hand, expression of distress and negative feelings has been consistently reported as characteristic of the dyadic therapeutic process and has been seen by psychodynamic therapists (Fenichel, 1945) as an auxillary component of the level of anxiety which is necessary for the motivation of client self-exploration.

A number of hypotheses were generated and tested in this study:

- (1) Relative to the accepted assumption of therapy process, the higher the level of therapist facilitating behavior, the higher will be the clients' average level of self-exploration.
- (2) Relative to the possibility that group members may have a significant therapeutic effect on each other, then the higher the level of group members' facilitating behavior, the higher will be their average level of self-exploration.

(3) On the other hand, the therapist's behavior may have a significant modeling effect on group members' facilitating behavior, and in this case the higher the level of therapist's facilitating behavior, then the higher will be the average level of group members' facilitating behavior.

(4) If the prediction in Hypothesis #1 is supported and level of therapist behavior is positively related to group members' self-exploration, then the overall level of self-exploration will be highest in the group whose therapist presents the highest level of facilitating behavior.

(5) Likewise, if there is a positive relationship between group members' facilitating behavior and self-exploration (Hypothesis #2), it would be expected that the overall level of self-exploration will be highest in the group which has the highest level of group members' facilitating behavior.

Method

Subjects in this study were co-therapists and clients in an encounter group and a traditional clinical psychotherapy group. Each group met for about two hours once a week for several months. An early session and a later session eight weeks apart were videotaped for each group. Six three-minute segments of videotape were systematically sampled from each of these sessions, randomized, divided into six 30-second sub-segments, and then rated on five-point scales for the six facilitating behaviors described above. The scales for

empathy, regard, congruence and willingness-to-be-known were adapted from client-centered research, while the scales for confrontation and emotional valency were developed by Freitag (1970). On these scales, a reliability of about .76 was obtained between two raters. An additional measure of therapeutic process was obtained using a standard nine-point self-exploration scale (Truax and Carkhuff, 1967). A reliability of about .80 was obtained among a separate set of three raters.

Data from the two groups were combined to test the first three hypotheses that therapist and client facilitating behavior would be significantly correlated with each other and both therapist and client facilitating behavior would be significantly correlated with average level of clients' self-exploration.

Results and Discussion

The results (Table 1) tended to confirm the findings of previous studies regarding the relationship between client self-exploration and therapist empathy ($r = .58, p < .05$), regard ($r = .32, p < .15$) and congruence ($r = .42, p < .10$). In addition, degree of therapist confrontation was also found to be a significant positive index ($r = .46, p < .05$) of extent of client self-exploration. This might be interpreted to suggest that greater therapeutic benefit is more likely to occur the more direct the therapist is in making strong interpersonal contact with clients, particularly in regard to

manifest incongruencies in client behavior.

Contrary to Hypothesis #2, results (Table 2) indicated that level of most client facilitating behavior tended to be unrelated to level of client self-exploration. For such facilitating behaviors as empathy, congruence and regard, apparently it is the therapist who has the greater impact on client self-exploration. On the other hand, a negative correlation ($r = -.38$, $p < .10$) approached significance for the relationship between client confrontation and self-exploration. It may be that among group members such an active interpersonal process as assertive confrontation may actually inhibit intrapersonal exploration, at least within the first 10-15 sessions of a help-oriented group. Relative to negative emotional expression, there was a significant positive correlation ($r = .42$, $p < .05$) between client behavior and self-exploration. This would support the traditional clinical notion that some emotional upset and the expression of negative feelings are a necessary correlate of therapeutic benefit.

Only partial support (Table 3) was found for a positive relationship between degree of therapist and client offered help-oriented behavior. The correlation was significant for empathy ($r = .78$, $p < .01$) and regard ($r = .50$, $p < .05$). Except for these behaviors, therapist modeling of facilitating behavior appears generally unrelated to manifestation of the same behavior by clients.

Another set of data analyses (Tables 4 and 5) was performed comparing the different therapeutic processes manifested in the encounter group and the psychotherapy group. In general, results supported the hypothesis that the group with the co-therapists who offered the highest level of facilitating behavior would manifest the highest level of client self-exploration. The clients in the psychotherapy group showed significantly more self-exploration ($t = 3.662$, $p < .01$) than the clients in the encounter group. Likewise, the co-therapists in the psychotherapy group manifested generally higher levels of empathy ($t = 3.99$, $p < .01$), regard ($t = 1.634$, $p < .10$) and congruence ($t = 2.173$, $p < .05$). Differences for the other behaviors were negligible.

Contrary to Hypothesis #5, the encounter group which had the highest level of client-offered facilitating behavior manifested the lowest level of client self-exploration (Table 5). The encounter group had higher levels on all six facilitating behaviors, these differences being significant for congruence ($t = 2.835$, $p < .01$), confrontation ($t = 2.214$, $p < .05$) and emotional valency ($t = 2.531$, $p < .01$).

These differences which were found between the encounter group and the psychotherapy group relative to Hypotheses #4 and #5 may be a function of the different goals, composition and format of the two groups. The psychotherapy group's format was therapeutic, characterized by a doctor-patient

relationship. The goal was essentially to help members with their debilitating personal problems; and the composition of the group was young adults who had sought out professional help because of their problems. This difference in composition is highlighted by the overall difference in levels of client facilitating behaviors (Table 5): for all six behaviors the psychotherapy group had lower levels of ratings indicating a lower level of help-oriented skills on these dimensions. The encounter group was egalitarian in format, the leaders being facilitators of interaction, but not professed experts in the group's particular content problems. The goal was to augment the members' interpersonal skills by sharing work-related experiences and by learning to give clear feedback to others regarding communication effectiveness and behavioral consequences of the other members. The composition of the group was high school teachers who had volunteered. Their high scores on all six help-oriented behavior scales--significantly higher on three--may be a reflection of their better overall social interaction behavior in comparison with the less well developed and/or appropriate social behavior of the psychotherapy group members.

These differences suggest a difference between the two groups relative to amount of general motivation to change and the specific direction toward which change was oriented as reflected in the behavior scales used in this study. It is

not surprising that the therapy group had a higher level of self-exploration (Table 5) since the motivation of this group was to understand and work through the individual causes of their problems. On the other hand, the overt goal of the encounter group was to explore school or task-related problems and therefore the self-exploration scale may not have been as relevant a process measure for this group.

Not only did the current study replicate some of the findings of earlier studies, but there were several equivocal and new findings. In order to further understand some of these, the following lines of research are suggested. First, in order to substantiate the suggested causal relationships between facilitating behavior and therapy process, a factorial study needs to be done. Second, the relationship between therapist and client facilitating behavior is potentially an interesting one as it relates to a complete description of helping processes. The current study failed to show either a complete lack of relationship or the presence of a significant relationship. A study of greater duration with a larger sample with measures taken several times over the period would help to describe the interrelationship between therapist and client facilitating behavior and the change in the interrelationship that occurs over time. Third, the relationship between members' facilitating behavior and self-exploration as they co-vary over time needs to be studied. A longer study

might help to provide information on whether clients can have significant helping effects on each other or whether client effects are limited and the helping process is primarily a function of the therapist's efforts. Finally, the differences found between the two groups studied were frequently significant and therefore very interesting. However, there is relatively little research to help explain the differences (e.g. Lieberman, Yalom and Miles, 1973). A repetition of the present study with a larger sample and control of several variables such as nature of group composition and therapists might help to clarify what the major differences are between different kinds of help-oriented groups.

In conclusion, this study has fulfilled some of the essential aspects of its goals by elucidating some of the processes of change within help-oriented groups, by distinguishing between the relationships of therapists and clients on the therapeutic process, by pointing up some of the differences in the helping process between an encounter group and a psychotherapy group, and by serving to further support the use of videotape for interpersonal and therapeutic process analysis.

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Tables

Key

E: Empathy
R: Regard
C: Congruence
WK: Willingness-To-Be-Known
AC: Assertive Confrontation
VE: Valency of Emotional Expression
DX: Depth of Self-Exploration

RELATIONSHIP AMONG GROUP

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Table 1

Correlations Between Therapist Facilitating Behavior
and Client Self-Disclosure

Process	Encounter	d.f.	Psychotherapy	d.f.	Combined	d.f.
E	-.11	7	.41	7	.58**	16
R	.00	8	.27	7	.32††	17
C	-.14	8	.46	7	.42†	17
WK	.07	5	.42	7	-.07	14
AC	.32	8	.40	7	.46**	17
VE	-.04	8	.12	7	.11	17

†† $p < .15$; † $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$

Table 2
Correlations Between Client Facilitating Behavior
and Client Self-Disclosure

Process	Encounter	d.f.	Psychotherapy	d.f.	Combined	d.f.
E	.18	9	-.05	8	.00	19
R	.01	10	.36	9	.11	21
C	.26	10	.21	10	.09	22
WK	.42	10	.21	10	.05	22
AC	.07	10	-.42	10	-.38†	22
VE	-.22	10	-.17	10	-.42**	22

† $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$

RELATIONSHIP AMONG GROUP

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Table 3

Correlations Between Therapist Facilitating Behavior
and Client Facilitating Behavior

Process	Encounter	d.f.	Psychotherapy	d.f.	Combined	d.f.
E	-.27	7	.54	6	.78*	15
R	.54	8	.56	7	.50**	17
C	.16	8	.77**	7	.25	17
WK	.07	5	.31	7	.18	14
AC	-.41	8	.02	7	-.30	17
VE	.25	8	.07	7	.106	17

** p .05; * p .01

RELATIONSHIP AMONG GROUP

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Table 4

Overall Means of Therapist Facilitating Behavior and t-test of Differences Between the Encounter Group and Psychotherapy Group

Process	Encounter	Psychotherapy	t	d.f.
E	2.94	3.76	3.991*	16
R	3.67	4.09	1.534†	17
C	3.84	4.11	2.173**	17
WK	3.10	2.96	1.299	14
AC	3.67	3.96	1.304	17
VE	2.93	2.98	.758	17

† $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$; * $p < .01$

Table 5

Overall Means of Client Facilitating Behavior and Self-Disclosure,
and t-tests of Differences Between the Encounter and Psychotherapy
Group

Process	Encounter	Psychotherapy	t	d.f.
E	2.82	2.80	.168	19
R	3.39	3.26	.529	21
C	3.79	3.34	2.835*	22
WK	3.47	3.23	1.328	22
AC	3.44	3.19	2.214**	22
VE	2.88	2.53	2.53]*	22
DX	4.86	5.19	3.662*	22

† $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$; * $p < .01$